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September 11th water quality, quantity training in Lockhart to focus on Plum Creek

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LOCKHART – A no-cost Texas Watershed Steward program workshop on water quality and availability issues related to Plum Creek will be held from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. September 11th at the First Baptist Church’s Fellowship Hall in Lockhart.

The training is open to anyone interested in improving land and water issues relating to Plum Creek, coordinators said. Participants are encouraged to pre-register at <http://tw.s.tamu.edu>.

The workshop is sponsored by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board in coordination with the Plum Creek Watershed Partnership and Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority.

“The workshop is designed to help watershed residents improve and protect their water resources by becoming involved in local watershed protection and management activities,” said Michael Haynes, AgriLife Extension agent for Caldwell County.

Haynes said the workshop will include an overview of water quality and watershed management in Texas and primarily will focus on water quality issues relating to Plum Creek, including current efforts to help improve and protect this important water source.

The training will include a discussion of watershed systems, types and sources of water pollution, and ways to improve and protect water quality. There also will be a group discussion on community-driven watershed protection and management.

“Plum Creek has historically been very important to the area, and will continue to be in years to come” said Nick Dornak, Plum Creek Watershed Coordinator. Dornak and others have been working to implement a Watershed Protection Plan that was developed for Plum Creek in 2008. An update to that plan is scheduled to be released next month.

“These ongoing implementation efforts consist of management measures aimed at protecting and improving water quality, and are a collaboration between local stakeholders, the Plum Creek Watershed Partnership, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, and Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board.” Dornak said. More information about these efforts and the Plum Creek Watershed Partnership can be found at <http://plumcreek.tamu.edu/> .

Dornak noted that the workshop would also provide attendees with information on the Texas Department of Agriculture’s 2012 Hog Out County Grants Program, which is designed to

encourage counties across the state to make a concentrated and coordinated effort to reduce the state's feral hog population.

“Caldwell County will be participating in this program for the first time and will be partnering with the Plum Creek Watershed Partnership to organize and implement the program,” he said. “In addition, the Caldwell County Commissioner's Court voted to allocate \$1,000 toward a feral hog bounty program that will coincide with the Hog Out activities. There will be a \$2 bounty for every verified feral hog tail turned in between October and December.”

Dornak said in 2011 the top performing counties in the Hog Out Program shared \$60,000 to continue their feral hog eradication activities.

Along with the free training and useful information, workshop participants will receive a free copy of the Texas Watershed Steward Handbook and a certificate of completion, said Galen Roberts AgriLife Extension program specialist and Watershed Steward Program coordinator.

The program will offer seven continuing education units in soil and water management for certified crop advisors, seven units for professional engineers and certified planners, and seven continuing education credits for certified teachers. It also offers three general continuing education units for Texas Department of Agriculture pesticide license holders, seven for certified landscape architects and three for certified floodplain managers.

Preregistration is open through the Texas Watershed Steward website, <http://tw.s.tamu.edu>.

“Participating in the Texas Watershed Steward program is a great opportunity to get involved and make a difference in your watershed,” said Roberts.

For more information and to preregister, go to <http://tw.s.tamu.edu> or contact Galen Roberts at 979-862-8070, groberts@ag.tamu.edu, or locally contact Michael Haynes at 512-398-3122, Michael.Haynes@ag.tamu.edu.

For more information about these efforts and the Plum Creek Watershed Partnership can be found at <http://plumcreek.tamu.edu/> or contact Nick Dornak at 512-213-7389, ndornak@plumcreekwatershed.org.

The Texas Watershed Steward program is funded through a Clean Water Act nonpoint source grant from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.